Aktuelle Meldung

openHPI: Five More Free Online Courses on IT to be Offered Next Year

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Potsdam. Anyone wishing to keep up with the current university knowledge on information technology will again have the opportunity in the coming year with the five free online courses to be offered by Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI). The new courses listed in the just released openHPI overview for 2014 are: Concepts in Parallel Computing, Networking via the Internet Protocol TCP/IP, Semantic Web Technologies, In-Memory Data Management and Introduction to Internet Security. Each of the six-week Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) will be launched by Hasso Plattner Institute on its interactive learning platform, openHPI, on February 3, March 31, May 26, September 1, and October 27, respectively.

OpenHPI has been offering free, open access online courses on information technology in German and English since September 2012. Approximately 56,000 on-line learners from over 114 countries are already registered at openHPI. The seventh course, which started at the end of October, provided participants with an in-depth understanding of business process modeling. Six courses are already available to users in the archive mode. In the meantime, the software company SAP also uses the openHPI technological platform to offer its own online courses via open.sap.com to employees, external developers and customers.

Owing to the international success of the program, the Hasso Plattner Institute will be further expanding its interactive learning platform openHPI.de. HPI director Prof. Christoph Meinel announced that the underlying system is currently being prepared for the rapidly increasing user numbers. "We will additionally be making new functions available and integrating social networks such as Facebook, Google+ or LinkedIn to make the interaction in our openHPI discussion forum easier," said the Potsdam computer scientist. These new functions will be introduced in the next months step-by-step.

According to Meinel, user activity on the online platform will be further supported and rewarded through the addition of gaming elements ("gamification"). Learners who participate in the community can receive different awards and compare their progress to that of other participants. Besides that, users can earn an expert status through active involvement in discussion forums and thereby give more weight to their statements in the

forum. A further area of concentration focuses on improving content display on mobile devices.

"Through the planned integration of social networks, openHPI participants will be able to learn even better with their friends and acquaintances and, for example, use video telephony offers such as Google Hangouts ," said Meinel. In the platform discussion forum it will also be easier to navigate through longer posts and extensive question-answer-exchanges. "The participants are invited to review helpful answers and mark especially interesting discussion threads" Meinel said.

As far as the learning videos at openHPI go, the openHPI tele-teaching experts are currently investigating how lecture transcripts and subtitles can be provided in different languages with the help of the community. "In this way, hearing impaired participants and those whose knowledge in the respective course language is lacking will also be able to take part in our courses," Meinel explained. According to the director, after expansion openHPI will not only have the technical advantage of being faster, but it will also have a modular, service-based architecture. "This will facilitate future changes and allow for interesting enchancements," Meinel added.

The Internet learning platform openHPI is unique worldwide as its contents concentrate on information technology and computer science and the courses are offered both in German and English. Unlike "traditional" lecture portals, the courses at openhpi follow a fixed six-week schedule – with a defined range of offers such as learning videos, texts, self-tests, regular homework and exam questions. These offers are combined with a social platform where participants can interact with fellow learners and course supervisors. Here they are able to clarify questions and expand on the topics.

Profile of Hasso Plattner Institute
The Hasso Plattner Institute for Software Systems Engineering GmbH (HPI) in Potsdam is Germany's university excellence center for IT Systems Engineering. It is the only university institution in Germany offering the bachelor and master program in "IT Systems Engineering" – a practical and engineering-oriented study program in computer science, in which 470 students are presently enrolled. The HPI School of Design Thinking is Europe's first innovation school and modeled on the Stanford d.school. It offers yearly 240 places for a supplementary study. There are a total of ten HPI professors and over 50 guest professors, lecturers and contracted teachers at the Institute. HPI carries out research noted for its high standard of excellence in its nine topic areas, as well as at the HPI Research School for PhD candidates, with its further research branches in Cape Town, Haifa and Nanjing. HPI teaching and research focus on the foundation and application of large-scale, highly complex and networked IT systems. The development and exploration of user-driven innovations for all sectors of life is an additional area of importance. HPI always earns the highest positions in the CHE university ranking.

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